

Central Intelligence Agency



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DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

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Political Upheaval in Burma

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Summary

Party Chairman Ne Win's purge of top-level party, army, and state officials has removed Brigadier General Tin Oo--long considered Ne Win's most likely successor--from power. Although official charges against Tin Oo and his supporters centered on corruption, we believe Ne Win was concerned over his former protege's growing independent power base and the dissension it caused among some senior military officers. More personnel changes at the lower levels are likely over the next few months, and another high-level shuffle has been rumored. Ne Win's actions, however, have reconfirmed his near total control of the government, and we expect no major policy shifts as a result of the purge.

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Fall of the Favored Son

Ne Win has groomed and then removed a number of potential successors since he seized power in a bloodless coup in 1962. For example, his two closest confidants in the early years, Brigadier Generals Aung Gyi and Tin Pe, were both eventually forced to resign. And in 1977, a number of military leaders were purged for coup plotting.

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Ne Win's latest victim, Brigadier General Tin Oo, may have been the most powerful of all those removed. He was the former head of the Military Intelligence Service and, as Joint General

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Secretary of the Burma Socialist Program Party (BSPP), ranked number three in the party. Through his control of the Directorate of Defense Services Intelligence (DDSI) and the National Intelligence Bureau (NIB), [] he had over the years placed proteges in influential positions throughout the government and party. A close confidant of Ne Win, Tin Oo had increased his power when Ne Win stepped down as President in 1981. []

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Officially, Tin Oo was stripped of all party, military, and government positions for misuse of funds; []

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[] We believe, however, that Tin Oo's most recent attempts at increasing his power caused such dissension among other high-level military and party officials--particularly President San Yu and Defense Minister Kyaw Htin--that Ne Win felt compelled to oust him. []

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Tin Oo's attempts to maneuver his supporters into high-level positions within the military ran into the strongest opposition. []

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Ne Win Tightens Control

[] Ne Win acted quickly in removing Tin Oo's supporters from power and placing men loyal to himself in the vacant positions. He ordered hundreds of investigations, focusing on intelligence personnel, and by the end of June one-third of DDSI personnel had been purged. Some of the first to be dismissed were Kan Nyunt, Tin Oo's nephew and Director of DDSI; and Thein Aung, formerly the number-two man in the NIB. []

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Tin Oo's future is unclear. Following a corruption investigation in July, he was arrested and now faces charges for misusing government property. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Ne Win may step in and protect him--perhaps bringing him back as an adviser. Regaining his former power, however, would be difficult for Tin Oo because he lacks support within the military and his power base in the intelligence community has been dismantled. [REDACTED]

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After Ne Win . . .

The succession issue also remains cloudy. Some low-level officials are still being removed, and the US Embassy cautions that additional high-level changes could occur at the October session of the People's Assembly. At least for now, the major benefactors from Tin Oo's fall appear to be San Yu and Kyaw Htin, both of whom are long-time allies of Ne Win. [REDACTED]

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For the moment, Ne Win at 73 is in relatively good health and in control of the government; consequently, a continuation of present policies is the most likely scenario over the near term. Should either San Yu or Kyaw Htin become more influential, however, we would expect a shift in some policies previously supported by Tin Oo and his followers. Burma's already cautious opening to the West, for example, could be slowed. San Yu reportedly holds especially rigid socialist views and was opposed to the liberalization--endorsed by Tin Oo--that over the past decade led to renewed ties with the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, increased foreign trade, cooperation with the United States on narcotics eradication, and improved relations with ASEAN countries. San Yu's position will probably be bolstered by the recent personnel changes--many of the men that now appear to be moving into positions of power have had few contacts through travel or training with foreign countries and, according to the US Embassy, are not particularly inclined to change Burma's policies of nonalignment and economic selfreliance. [REDACTED]

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Changes in Party and Government Positions*

<u>Dismissed</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Replacement</u>
Tin Oo	Joint General Secretary National Security Committee Council State member People's Assembly	Sein Lwin Tun Yi Tun Yi Kyaw Khaing
Bo Ni	Minister for Home and Religious Affairs People's Assembly	Min Gaung Khin Maung Swe
Kan Nyunt	Director, Defense Services Intelligence People's Assembly	Aung Ko Ba Maw
Myo Aung	Quartermaster General of Burma Army People's Assembly	G Taung Za Kha Aye Ohn
Thein Aung	Party Disciplinary Committee People's Assembly	Min Din Khin Maung Win
Mon San Hlaing	Council of People's Justices People's Assembly	Tin Ohn Thein Aung
Soe Thin	Council of People's Attorneys People's Assembly	Hla Tint Toe Chit
Tin Sein	Minister of Livestock Breeding and Fisheries People's Assembly	Sein Tun Aung Myint Baw
Khin Kyaw Nyo	Managing Director of Ceramic Industries Corporation	Tin Aye
Soe Myint	Ambassador to Thailand	Ko Ko Gyi
Myint Thein	Military Attache, Bangkok	**
Thein Aung	Director, General of People's Police Force (PPF)	**
Aung Kyu	Director, Bureau of Special Investigations in PPF	**

*Partial listing.

**No replacement has been named for these positions.

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<u>Dismissed</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Replacement</u>
Mya Nyein	Deputy Director, General Bureau of Special Intelligence	**
Thein Toe	National Intelligence Bureau	**
Kyi	Director, Press and Scrutinizing Branch, Home Ministry	**
Maung Maung Zin	Managing Director, Immigration and Manpower	**
One Tun	Managing Director, Myanma Insurance Corporation	**
Kyaw Shein	Managing Director, State Timber Corporation	**
Win Myint	General Manager, State Timber Corporation	**
Kyaw Myint	Managing Director, Customs Department	**
Kyi Swe	Deputy Director, General Customs Department	**
Soe Nyunt	Managing Director, Myanma Export/Import Corporation	**
Aye Lwin	Managing Director, Union of Burma Bank	**
Myint Tun	Managing Director, Myanma Gems Corporation	**
San Myint	Managing Director, People's Pearls and Fisheries Corporation	**
Aung Thu	Deputy Director, General Internal Revenue	**
Maung Kyaw	Defense Attache, Tokyo	**
Than Tun	Counsellor, Washington	**
Aung Lwin	Military Attache, London	**
Myint Oo	Charge d'Affaires, Singapore	**
Win Pe	Rangoon Command	**
Myo Naung	Commander of 26th Regiment	**
Win Myint	Ministry of Defense	**
Kyi Win Hlaing	Principal of Bee House Project	**

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